

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 and 35 are pending in the application. Claims 15-34 have been cancelled, and claim 35 has been amended, leaving claims 1-14 and 35 for consideration upon entry of the present Amendment.

Objections to Claims:

Claim 35 was been objected for informalities. Claim 35 has been amended in an effort to address the Examiner's concerns. In view of this amendment, reconsideration and withdrawal of this objection are respectfully requested.

Comments regarding Specification:

In response to the comments regarding the Abstract, the Abstract has been replaced with a new abstract with terminology and fewer words intended to address the Examiner's concerns. Approval of the new Abstract is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 101

Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 USC § 101 as allegedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. In particular, the Action alleges that claim 1 would reasonably be interpreted by one of ordinary skill as a system of software per se, failing to fall within a statutory category of invention. The Action reasons that the system of components also is not a machine, process, manufacture nor composition of matter. Applicants respectfully disagree.

An example of an autonomic processing system as claimed in claim 1 is illustrated in FIG. 2 of the application. The system includes a core 100 having components 291-299. The core 100 and the components 291-299 are included as part of an email server system 70 illustrated in FIG. 1. Based on these illustrations and the corresponding description at paragraphs 38-58, it is clear that the components 291 and 299 are part of a system that is statutory subject matter, i.e., an autonomic processing system in an email server system.

Moreover, the specification, at paragraph 139, not only defines the term 'component' to include "modules, routines, subroutines, classes, etc." as noted in the Office Action but also specifies that "all or portions of any components can be implemented in whole or in part

as application specific integrated circuits (ASICs), including but not limited to field programmable gate arrays (FPGAs) or other forms of hardware and/or as firmware.” The specification further indicates that the term “component”, in its broader sense, should be understood to include ASICs, as well.

Given the example of the components included in an email server system and the definition of the terminology “components” as including hardware, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is directed to statutory subject matter. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 (and dependent claims 2-14) are respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections Under 35 USC § 103(a)

Claims 1-13, 15-19 and 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hickey et al. (US Publication No. 2002/0087646) (“Hickey”), in view of Smith et al. (US Patent 7,139,801) (“Smith”). Claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hickey, in view of Smith, and further in view of Schiavone et al. (US Publication 2002/0120581) (“Schiavone”). Claims 20-25 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hickey, in view of Smith, and further in view of Danon (US Publication 2003/0110211) (“Danon”) and Davis et al. (US Publication 2004/0158610) (“Davis”). Claim 26 was rejected as being unpatentable over Hickey, in view of Smith, and further in view of Danon. Claims 27-31 were rejected as being unpatentable over Hickey, in view of Smith, and further in view of Atencio et al. (US Publication 2004/0210450) (“Atencio”). Claims 32-33 were rejected as being unpatentable over Hickey, in view of Smith, and further in view of Roskind et al. (US Publication 2004/0128540) (“Roskind”). Claim 34 was rejected as being unpatentable over Hickey, in view of Smith, and further in view of Roskind, and further in view of Weiss (US Patent 6,930,598) (“Weiss”). To the extent these rejections have not been rendered moot by the cancellation of claims, these rejections are respectfully traversed.

According to an exemplary embodiment, an autonomic email processing system and method are provided that uses a unique identification number to track and process related emails. See, e.g., paragraph 62 of the specification.

Claim 1, for example, recites an autonomic e-mail processing system for use on a voluntary basis by senders and recipients as part of an e-mail server system. The autonomic

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e-mail processing system comprises a first component for enabling a sender of an e-mail message to designate a first e-mail message for autonomic processing. The first e-mail message has at least an address portion which identifies a plurality of intended recipients and a note portion which contains information to be sent to the intended recipients of the e-mail. The system further comprises a second component for identifying the first e-mail message designated for autonomic processing with a unique sending identification number within the autonomic processing system, a third component operable to enable intended recipients to indicate that an autonomic response is being sent in response to the first e-mail message, and a fourth component for identifying each autonomic response to the first e-mail message with a responding identification number that in combination with the unique sending identification number for first e-mail message forms a combination identification number that is unique within the autonomic processing system. The system further comprises a fifth component operable to enable the sender of the first e-mail message to designate that the processing of the first e-mail message has been completed, and a sixth component operable to inform at least a plurality of the intended recipients that the processing of the first e-mail message has been completed.

Hickey discloses a system and method for a group electronic mailbox. The Action relies on Hickey as disclosing the first, second, third, and fifth components set forth in claim 1. In particular, with regard to the second component, the Action, at page 4, points to the “unique email address” described in paragraphs 0006 and 0051 of Hickey as corresponding to the claimed “unique sending identification number”. As described in paragraph 0006 of Hickey, each user is assigned a unique email address with an associated email mailbox for receiving and storing email messages. The “unique email address” of Hickey is used to designate an email address of a user, not to identify an email message within an autonomic processing system. Thus, Hickey fails to disclose or suggest at least a second component for identifying the first e-mail message designated for autonomic processing with a unique sending identification number within the autonomic processing system as recited in claim 1.

The Action relies on Smith for the claimed features missing from Hickey. In particular, the Action admits that Hickey does not disclose a fourth component for identifying each autonomic response to the first e-mail message with a responding identification number that in combination with the unique sending identification number for first e-mail message forms a combination identification number that is unique within the autonomic processing

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system. The Action indicates, at page 5, that this feature is shown in Smith. In particular, the Action points to the Abstract, col. 3, ll. 19-23 and ll. 46-52 and col. 5, ll. 40-58 and the “globally unique identifier” of Smith as corresponding to the fourth component as claimed. Col. 5, ll. 46-49 of Smith describe a “globally unique identifier” that is included in each electronic mail message transmitted via electronic mail transmission servers. Col. 3, ll. 48-50 describe the “globally unique identifier” as including a unique identifier for a particular message list, message and/or recipient. Nowhere in Smith is there a disclosure or suggestion of identifying each autonomic response to the first email message with a responding identification number. Thus, even if the teachings of Smith and Hickey were combined, the result, at best, would be an email message with a unique email address and a globally unique identifier, not a combination identification number that is unique within the autonomic processing system as set forth in claim 1.

Based on the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that Hickey and Smith fail to disclose or suggest an autonomic e-mail processing system comprising, in pertinent part, a second component for identifying the first e-mail message designated for autonomic processing with a unique sending identification number within the autonomic processing system, and a fourth component for identifying each autonomic response to the first e-mail message with a responding identification number that in combination with the unique sending identification number for first e-mail message forms a combination identification number that is unique within the autonomic processing system. Accordingly, claim 1 is considered allowable over any combination of Hickey and Smith.

Claim 35 recites similar features as claim 1 and is considered allowable for at least the same reasons. Claims 2-14 depend from and include all the features recited in claim 1 and are considered allowable over any combination of the cited documents.

With regard to claim 14, the Action relies on Schiavone for the features missing from Hickey and Smith. Schiavone discloses a system and method for reply based electronic mail transactions. Schiavone does not disclose or suggest an autonomic e-mail processing system comprising, in pertinent part, a second component for identifying the first e-mail message designated for autonomic processing with a unique sending identification number within the autonomic processing system, and a fourth component for identifying each autonomic

response to the first e-mail message with a responding identification number that in combination with the unique sending identification number for first e-mail message forms a combination identification number that is unique within the autonomic processing system as set forth in independent claim 1. Thus, Schiavone fails to make up for the deficiencies of Hickey and Smith. Accordingly, claim 14 is considered allowable for any combination of these documents.

With regard to claims 15-34, these claims have been cancelled, rendering the rejections of these claims moot.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the instant application is in condition for allowance. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that this application be allowed and a Notice of Allowance issued. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference with Applicants' attorneys would be advantageous to the disposition of this case, the Examiner is cordially requested to telephone the undersigned.

In the event the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks deems additional fees to be due in connection with this application, Applicants' attorney hereby authorizes that such fee be charged to Deposit Account No. 09-0458.

Respectfully submitted,

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